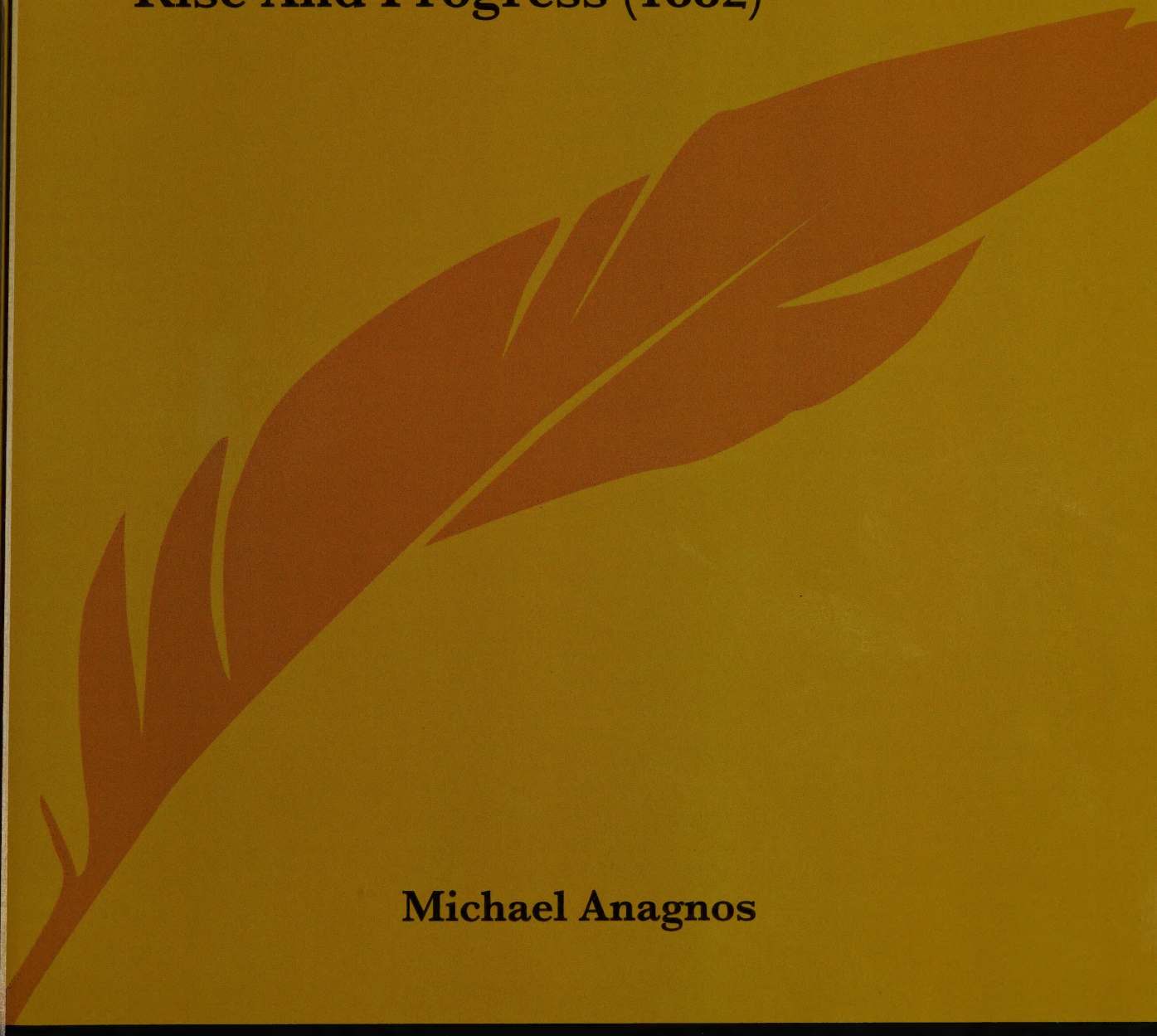
Education Of The Blind

Historical Sketch Of Its Origin, Rise And Progress (1882)



Michael Anagnos

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Michael Anagnos

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EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ITS ORIGIN, RISE AND PROGRESS.

It has been my purpose to give in the following pages a brief and succinct historical outline of the origin, rise and progress of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind, the first establishment of the kind founded on this continent, and now entering upon the last year of its first semi-centennial.

But, in order to take a comprehensive view of the work of the education of the blind, it will be necessary to glance at the springs of its original inception in France, to go back to the early stages of its development, and to trace the course of the marvellous stream of beneficence, which has transformed a desolate wilderness into a fair and blooming garden.

The present sketch will therefore treat concisely of the following topics: —

First, of the general condition of the blind in the past, and the neglect formerly endured by them.

Second, of the early attempts at their education made in different countries.

Third, of the organization of the Paris school by Valentin Haüy.

Fourth, of the establishment of similar institutions in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe.

Fifth, of the foundation and development of the New England institution.

Sixth, of the education and training of Laura Bridgman; and,

Seventh, of the establishment of schools for the blind throughout the United States of America.

A brief comparison of the distinctive features of the systems of instruction and training for the blind in this country and in Europe will bring this sketch to a close.

I. — Condition of the Blind in the Past.

History has preserved sundry particulars regarding blind persons who have of themselves acquired great knowledge in various branches of learning, and won distinction in science, literature and art; but these were phenomenal cases, — mere shooting stars on the horizon of deep darkness, ignorance and neglect. The great mass of this afflicted class were everywhere mere objects of charity, which, however wisely it may be administered, wounds the spirit while it soothes the flesh. From Bartimeus to Lesueur — the first pupil of Haüy — the blind were left to procure a precarious subsistence by begging at the entrance of the temples, in the churchyards, or by the wayside. Their infirmity was considered a sufficient cause to prevent them from participating in the activities of life, and from enjoying the blessings of instruction or the benefits of industry. Discouraged by the apparent incapacity of the blind, men shrank from the task of endeavoring to combat the ills which their affliction had entailed upon them, and to rescue them from the evils of idleness and the horrors of intellectual darkness. They were even allowed,

at times, to become the objects of harsh and inhuman pastimes in the hands of ignorant and vicious people. The following instance may give some idea of the condition and treatment of the blind during the fifteenth century: —

In the month of August, 1425, under the reign of Charles VII., four blind men, cased in full armor and provided with clubs, were placed in a fenced square of the Hôtel d'Armagnac with a large hog, which was to be the prize of whoever should kill it. The struggle having begun, the poor sightless creatures, in endeavoring to hit the animal, struck each other with such violence that, but for their armor, they would certainly have killed each other. With this cruel sport the savage and unfeeling spectators were much diverted.

It is curious that a pagan and uncivilized nation should have set a good example to enlightened christians in this respect. It is stated, in Charlevoix's history, that in Japan the blind were long ago made to fill a comparatively useful sphere. The government kept a large number of them in an establishment, and their business was to learn the history of the empire through all the remote ages, to arrange it systematically by chapter and verse in their memories, and to transmit it from generation to generation, thus forming a sort of perennial walking and talking library of useful historical knowledge.

II. — Early Attempts at the Education of the Blind.

During the sixteenth century, thoughtful and benevolent men sought to devise processes for the instruction of the blind, but with no great success. Several un-

fruitful attempts were also made in the early part of the seventeenth century to prepare some sort of books for them, both in engraved and raised letters. Among others, Jérôme Cardan had conceived that it would be possible to teach the blind to read and write by means of feeling, and cited, in support of this view, several facts reported by Erasmus.

The first book which called attention to the condition and miseries of the blind was published in Italy, in 1646. It was written by one of the learned sons of that favored country, in the form of a letter addressed from S. D. C. to Vincent Armanni, and was printed in Italian and French under the title *Il cieco afflitto e consolato;* or, *L'aveugle affligé et consolé.*

In 1670, padre Lana Terzi, a Jesuit of Brescia, who had previously devoted a few pages to the education of the deaf, published a treatise on the instruction of the blind.

Jacques Bernouilli, being at Geneva in 1676, taught Mademoiselle Elizabeth Waldkirch, who had lost her sight two months after birth, to read; but he did not make known the means which he employed.

Dr. Burnet, bishop of Salisbury, gives, in his "Journey in Switzerland," a detailed account of Mademoiselle Walkier, of Schaffhousen, whose eyes had been burned when she was a year old. She spoke five languages, and was a theologian, a philosopher, and a good musician. This young person had learned to write by means of hollow characters cut in wood, which she at first passed over with a pointed iron. She had afterwards made use of a pencil, and finally, when Bishop Burnet was at Schaffhousen, in October, 1685, he saw her write very rapidly and very correctly.

Two years later appeared Locke's famous "Essay on the Human Understanding," in which was discussed the problem proposed to him by Molyneux, — a scholarly writer and member of the Irish parliament, — whether a person blind from his birth would, upon being suddenly restored to sight, be able to distinguish, by his eyes alone, a globe from a cube, the difference between which he had previously recognized by feeling? The question was answered in the negative, both by the author of the essay and by his "learned and worthy friend."

In 1703, Leibnitz took up the subject, and his conclusions were at variance with those of Locke and Molyneux.

A few years later, that sightless mathematical wonder, Nicholas Saunderson, appeared on the literary horizon of England, and made such advances in the higher departments of science, that he was appointed, "though not matriculated at the university," on the recommendation of Sir Isaac Newton, to fill the chair which a short time previous had been occupied by himself at Cambridge. Expounding from the depths of the eternal night in which he lived the most abstruse points of the Newtonian philosophy, and especially the laws of optics, or the theory of solar refraction, and communicating his ideas with unequalled perspicuity and precision, he filled his audience with surprise, and became the object of general admiration.

In 1729, while Saunderson was still at the zenith of his fame at Cambridge (having just been created doctor of laws by a mandate of George II.), Locke's answer to Molyneux's problem was receiving confirma-

tion from the experience of a boy blind from birth, whom Cheselden, the celebrated anatomist, had successfully couched for cataracts and restored to perfect sight at the age of thirteen. This youth was not able at first to recognize by vision the objects which were most familiar to his touch. It was long before he could discriminate by his eye between his old companions, the family cat and dog, dissimilar as such animals appear to us in color and conformation. Being ashamed to ask the oft-repeated question, he was observed one day to pass his hand carefully over the cat, and then, looking at her steadfastly, to exclaim, "So, puss, I shall know you another time." This case, the most remarkable of the kind, faithfully detailed by the surgeon himself in No. 402 of the "Philosophical Transactions," led to similar experiments afterwards, the conclusions of which did not differ essentially from those of Locke.

The spirit of free inquiry, which had been unchained in the preceding century, having passed by a natural transition from expatiation in the regions of taste and abstract philosophy into those of social science and human life, became bold and restless, longing for greater triumphs than those achieved heretofore. The French *savans*, who were endeavoring to dissipate the clouds of authority and the foggy mists of error, were on the alert for events touching upon important psychological questions, and calculated to help the cause of humanity.

In 1746, Condillac took up Locke's problem and the experiments of Cheselden, and discussed with much clearness and dialectic skill the mental processes of the blind.

Simultaneously with his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* was first published a volume of the poems of Dr. Blacklock, of Scotland, who, although deprived of sight in early infancy, went through the usual course of studies at the university of Edinburgh, and distinguished himself by his proficiency in classical literature, in *belles-lettres*, in metaphysics, and in all other branches of knowledge. The productions of his muse are marked by elegance of diction, ardor of sentiment, and accurate descriptions of visible objects. His writings will be searched in vain, however, for poetry of a very high order. He says of himself, what doubtless is true of all persons similarly situated, that he always associated some moral quality with visible objects.

The following year appeared in Dublin a biography of Saunderson from the pen of his disciple and successor in the professorship at Cambridge, William Inchlif or Hinchliffe. This work contained a minute description, with illustrative drawings, of the appliances used by the sightless mathematician, and was most eagerly read in France.

The abbé Deschamps, treating of the education of the deaf-mutes, also sketched the outlines of the art of teaching the blind to read and write.

Meanwhile Lenôtre, the famous blind man of Puiseaux, appeared on the stage, and, by the originality which stamped everything that he did, attracted universal attention. He was the son of a professor of philosophy in the university of Paris, and had attended with advantage courses of chemistry and botany at the *Jardin du Roi*. After having dissipated a part of his

fortune, he retired to Puiseaux, a little town in Gatinais, where he established a distillery, the products of which he came regularly once a year to Paris to dispose of. It was his custom to sleep during the day and rise in the evening. He worked all night, "because," as he himself said, "he was not then disturbed by anybody." His wife used to find everything perfectly arranged in the morning. Having found in the resources of his mind and in his own activity a shelter from poverty, he lived happily in the midst of his family. His retired and extraordinary mode of life earned for him a sort of reputation. Diderot, then looking out for philosophical sensations, visited him at his home, and found him occupied in teaching his seeing son to read with raised characters. The blind man put to him some very singular questions on the transparency of glass, colors, and such matters. He asked if naturalists were the only persons who saw with the microscope; if the machine which magnified objects was greater than that which diminished them; if that which brought them near was shorter than that which removed them to a distance. He conceived the eye to be "an organ upon which the air produces the same effect as the staff on the hand," and defined a mirror as "a machine by which objects are placed in relief, out of themselves." On being interrogated as to whether he felt a great desire to have eyes, he answered, "Were it not for the mere gratification of curiosity, I think I should do as well to wish for long arms. It seems to me that my hands would inform me better of what is going on in the moon than your eyes and telescopes; and then the eyes lose the power of vision more readily than the hands that of

feeling. It would be better to perfect the organ which I have than to bestow on me that which I have not." This interview, together with the knowledge of Saunderson's appliances obtained from a perusal of his biography, called out, in 1749, Diderot's ingenious *Lettres sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient*, which set Paris ablaze with enthusiasm and inquiry, and which procured for him at once an acquaintance with Voltaire and three months' imprisonment at Vincennes. Of the many stupid blunders and imbecile acts which emanated from the government of Louis XV., this incarceration was the most unaccountable. Like any other unprovoked outrage, it created great surprise. It added one more stigma of violence to the crown of that rapacious monarch, — whose tyranny and debauchery had already stripped him of the early appellation of " well-beloved," — wrought up public feeling in favor of the persecuted author to a state of fervor, and converted the current of astonishment into a cataract of popular indignation. Diderot was released; but the resistance shown to his liberal opinions had set the minds of men afloat, and restlessness was followed by high excitation. He became at one stroke the lion of the day and the champion of the blind, and, his speculations about them being widely spread, enlisted general interest in their cause. Captivated by the novelty of the ideas which he developed in the famous letters, dazzled by the eloquence which he employed, and moved by his recital of the woes and disadvantages which beset the void of sight, people naturally began to think about the amelioration of the condition of the blind.

In 1763, Dr. Thomas Reid endeavored to show in his

essay, entitled " An Inquiry into the Human Mind," that the blind, if properly instructed, are capable of forming almost every idea and attaining almost every truth which can be impressed on the mind through the medium of light and color, except the sensations of light and color themselves. The object of this work was to refute the opinions of Locke and Hartley respecting the connection which they supposed to exist between the phenomena, powers and operations of the mind, and to found human knowledge on a system of instinctive principles. Dr. Reid's views concerning those pleasures of which the sense of sight is commonly understood to be the only channel were similar to the observations made by Burke in 1756, in his treatise on the " Sublime and Beautiful." This author appeals not only to the scientific acquirements of Saunderson, but also to the poetry of Dr. Blacklock, as a confirmation of his doctrine. " Here," says he, " is a poet, doubtless as much affected with his own descriptions as any that reads them can be; and yet he is affected with this strong enthusiasm by things of which he neither has, nor possibly can have, any idea further than that of bare sound."

While in prison, Diderot was often visited by the celebrated philosopher of the age, Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose warm interest in all sufferers, and particularly in the blind, was manifest. This master spirit of progress, who was soon to become not merely the forerunner but the creator of a new era in the history of mankind, was already the champion of humanity, and the apostle of nature in all things. As Villemain expresses it, " his words, descending like a flame of fire,

moved the souls of his contemporaries." While, on the one hand, Rousseau was teaching, in a calm, logical manner, that "true philosophy is to commune with one's self," and that reason is the source, the assurance and the criterion of truth, he was, on the other, thrilling two continents with his memorable declaration, that "man is born free, but is everywhere in chains," — which later became the gospel of the Jacobins. His passionate feeling, deep thought, stupendous learning, refined taste, profound pathos and resolute bearing had such effect not only upon the minds of the lower classes of society, but even upon those of the nobility and the courtiers themselves, that thunders of applause shook the theatre of Versailles at the celebrated lines of Voltaire, —

"Je suis fils de Brutus, et je porte en mon cœur
La liberté gravée et les rois en horreur."

By the touch of the magic wand of Rousseau's eloquence the tree of tyranny was to be uprooted and the whole framework of despotism torn down. No sooner had he opened his lips than he restored earnestness to the world, replaced selfishness by benevolence, engrafted the shoots of tenderness on the stock of hardness of heart and exclusiveness, wrought up France into a mood of sympathy with afflicted humanity, and rendered the eighteenth century an earnest and sincere one, full of beneficence, replete with faith in man's capacity for improvement, productive of grand ideas, and adorned by many virtues. Charity never was more active than at this period, when philanthropy had become a sort of fashion, and the movements for the suppression of men-

dicancy and the elevation of individual independence, self-respect and dignity, common enterprises. The great designs and inventions for the removal or palliation of physical or mental disabilities which stand as significant indices on the road of modern civilization were all of them fostered on the fertile soil of France. Prominent among these was unquestionably the one which aimed at the deliverance of the blind; and there is no doubt that the conception of its importance is due rather to the genius of the celebrated author of "Émile" than to the mental resources of any one else. True, Diderot was the first writer who called special and direct attention to the condition and wants of this afflicted class, and made them popularly known; but neither he, nor Locke, nor Leibnitz, nor Reid, nor Condillac, nor any of the encyclopædists, went beyond the boundaries of abstract psychological speculation. They proposed no measures of practical utility or relief, nor did they devise any plans for the instruction and training of sightless persons. It was Rousseau who first asked the momentous question, "What can we do to alleviate the lot of this class of sufferers, and how shall we apply to their education the results of metaphysics?" It was he who suggested the embossed books which were afterwards printed by Haüy in a crude form. It was under the genial warmth of his marvellous pen that the plant of the education of both the blind and the deaf-mutes grew, blossomed and throve.

But, although Rousseau's keen observations and practical suggestions gave form and wise direction to the fugitive glimpses of abstract speculation and isolated individual effort, yet the blind had still to await

the coming of their deliverer. An accidental circumstance sent him to them.

III. — Valentin Haüy and the School at Paris.

In the summer of 1783, the proprietor of a place of refreshment in one of the principal thoroughfares of Paris, desirous of increasing his custom, procured the services of eight or ten blind persons, whom he arranged before a long desk, with goggles on nose and instruments in their hands. Upon the stand were placed open music-books, and the sightless men, feigning to read their notes from these, executed, at short intervals, the most "discordant symphonies." The object of the proprietor of the place, — which was afterwards known by the name of *Café des Aveugles*, — was gained. The music drew a large crowd, who received the ridiculous performances with boisterous and heartless mirth, while consuming refreshments. Among the most interested by-standers was Valentin Haüy, the brother of the eminent crystallologist, and a man of large heart and head, with deep feeling for the woes of humanity and the power of thought to invent means for their alleviation. He began at once to ponder upon the condition of the blind, and to question whether a method of reading might be devised which should in some measure counterbalance their privation and give them some comfort and consolation for the affliction under which they labored. In his famous "Essay on the Education of the Blind," Haüy describes with charming simplicity and impressive modesty the bitter feelings and serious reflections which the performances at the *Café des Aveugles* had given him. "A very different sentiment from

that of delight," he says, "possessed our soul, and we conceived, at that very instant, the possibility of turning to the advantage of those unfortunate people the means of which they had only an apparent and ridiculous enjoyment. Do not the blind, said we to ourselves, distinguish objects by the diversity of their form? Are they mistaken in the value of a piece of money? Why can they not distinguish a C from a G in music, or an *a* from an *f* in orthography, if these characters should be rendered palpable to the touch? While we were reflecting on the usefulness of such an undertaking, another observation struck us. A young child, full of intelligence but deprived of sight, listened with profit to the correction of his brother's classical exercises. He often even besought him to read his elementary books to him. He, however, more occupied with his amusements, turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of his unfortunate brother, who was soon carried off by a cruel disease.

"These different examples soon convinced us how precious it would be for the blind to possess the means of extending their knowledge, without being obliged to wait for, or sometimes even in vain to demand, the assistance of those who see."

Having got so far, Haüy gathered together all the information which could be drawn from the history of celebrated congenital blind persons with regard to the special processes which they had employed.

In England, Saunderson had devised a ciphering-tablet. In France, the blind man of Puiseaux and Mademoiselle de Salignac had used raised letters, and Lamouroux had invented tangible musical characters.

In Germany, Weissemburg, blind from the age of seven, had accustomed himself to trace signs in relief. He had made maps of ordinary cards divided by threads, on which beads varying in size were strung, to indicate the different orders of towns, and covered with glazed sands in various ways to distinguish the seas, countries, provinces, etc. By means of these processes he had instructed a young blind girl, named Maria Theresa von Paradis.

This gifted child was born in Vienna, in 1759, and lost her sight at three years of age. Her parents were persons of rank and fortune,—her father being aulic councillor of the empire,—and they spared no expense in cultivating her extraordinary talents, and procuring for her the various ingenious contrivances then known for facilitating the education of the blind. Under the instruction of Weissemburg and the baron von Kempelen, the deviser of the *mechanical chess-player* and the speaking automaton, she had learned to spell with letters cut out of pasteboard, and to read words pricked upon cards with pins. Herr von Kempelen built for her a little press, by means of which she printed with ink the sentences which she composed, and in this way maintained a correspondence with her teachers and friends. She made use of a large cushion, into which she stuck pins to form notes or letters.

Having devoted much of her time to the study and practice of the pianoforte and organ, under the care of Herr Hozeluch and other masters, Mademoiselle von Paradis suddenly appeared before the musical world as an accomplished *pianiste*. She was the godchild of the empress Maria Theresa,—who allowed her

an annual pension of two hundred florins, — and her performances at the palace and in the aristocratic circles of Vienna were received with *éclat*. Accompanied by her mother, she made a grand professional tour through the capitals and principal towns of central Europe and England, and charmed the rulers, the high functionaries, and the cultivated classes of society everywhere. In 1784, she ventured to Paris, and there she took part in the brilliant concerts of the winter, and achieved her grandest triumphs. No one was more enthusiastic at her magnificent success than Haüy, who immediately sought and made her acquaintance, and to whom she exhibited her appliances and apparatus and explained their use. Profiting by these observations, he began at once to lay the foundations of a complete system of education for those who had hitherto been left entirely untaught and uncared for. The abbé de l'Épée had at about the same period, in a certain sense, restored the deaf-mutes to intelligence and communion with the world around them.

Haüy, having determined to test his plans and methods by the instruction of one or more sightless persons, found, after some time, a congenital blind lad of seventeen years, named Lesueur, who was in the habit of soliciting alms at the door of the chapel *Bonne Nouvelle*. In order to dissuade him from his degrading profession, the eager philanthropist promised to pay him from his own pocket an amount of money equal to that which he gained as a mendicant. Lesueur accepted the offer, and proved a very tractable pupil. On him Haüy tried his inventions almost as rapidly as they proceeded from his own brain, and with such remarkable success that,

as a proof of the positions which he had taken in an essay on the education of the blind, read by him before the Royal Academy of Sciences, at their invitation, he exhibited his pupil's attainments. The members of the assembly were carried as if by storm, and a commission was appointed to examine the matter more fully, and report. Meanwhile the Philanthropic Society, which had undertaken, as soon as it was organized, to assist twelve indigent sightless children by giving them twelve livres per month, entrusted them to the care of Haüy. Thus the first school for the blind was established in a small house in the *rue Coquillière.*

Nothing further was wanting to the founder of the institution but the public support of the *savans.* This was soon to be given. During the interval, however, the establishment was rapidly progressing, and the art of embossing books for the blind was an undisputed triumph of Haüy's ingenuity. This discovery had been long, though dimly, foreshadowed. According to Francesco Lucas, letters engraved on wood had been used in Spain as early as the sixteenth century, which were reproduced in Italy, with some modifications, by Rampazzetto, in 1573; but these were in intaglio instead of being in relief, and all attempts to ascertain their configuration by feeling proved fruitless. In 1640, a writing-master of Paris, named Pierre Moreau, caused movable raised characters to be cast in lead for the use of the blind; but he relinquished the scheme for reasons unknown to us. Movable letters on small tablets were also tried; but these were well adapted only for instructing seeing children to read. In fact, it was by means of similar characters that Usher, afterwards arch-

bishop of Armagh, was taught to read by his two aunts, who were both blind. Various other methods were employed, but none of them received general approbation until Haüy's great invention, which seems to have been partly the result of accident. Mr. Gailliod, who at a later date became one of his most celebrated pupils, thus relates the circumstance:

"Lesueur was sent one day to his master's desk for some article, and passing his fingers over the papers, they came in contact with the back of a printed note, which, having received an unusually strong impression, exhibited the letters in relief on the reverse. He distinguished an *o*, and brought the paper to his teacher to show him that he could do so. Haüy at once perceived the importance of the discovery, and testing it further by writing upon paper with a sharp point, and reversing it, found that Lesueur read it with great facility."

The ingenious inventor proceeded to produce letters in relief by pressing the type strongly on sized paper, and his success was complete. Thus the art of embossing books for the blind was discovered. The first characters adopted by Haüy were those of the Illyrian or Sclavonic alphabet, which were doubtless preferred on account of their square form; but these were afterwards altered and improved.

In February, 1785, the commission of the Royal Academy made its report, and while pointing out the features which the system of Haüy had in common with the agencies previously employed by individual blind persons, declared that to him alone were due their perfection, extension, and arrangement into a veritable

method. They concluded by saying that "if the success which we have witnessed does honor to the intelligence of the pupils, it is no less satisfactory and creditable to their instructor, whose beneficent labors merit the public gratitude."

This report had a marvellous effect upon the community. The school for the blind became one of the lions of Paris, and was for some time absolutely the rage. All classes of society were interested in the establishment, and each one strove to out-do the other. Eminent musicians and actors gave performances for its benefit. The Lyceum, the Museum, the *Salon de Correspondence* soon vied with one another for the privilege of having the young sightless pupils stammer (to borrow the expression of their instructor) the first elements of reading, arithmetic, history, geography, and music at their sessions; and these exercises were always concluded by collections for their benefit. Donations poured in from all sides, and the funds were placed in the treasury of the Philanthropic Society (still charged, at that time, with providing the expenses of the establishment), which had been removed to the *rue Nôtre Dame des Victoires*, No. 18.

Finally, on the 26th December, 1786, the blind children of Haüy's school, to the number of twenty-four, and a seeing lad taught by them, were admitted at Versailles to the presence of the royal family. They were lodged and cared for at the palace for eight days, and their exercises made a deep impression upon the hearts of the king, the queen, and princes. Haüy became a favorite of Louis XVI., and was made interpreter to his majesty, the navy department, and the *Hôtel de Ville*, for the Eng-

lish, German, and Dutch languages; royal interpreter and professor of ancient inscriptions; and lastly, secretary to the king. These honors were no doubt as gratifying to the recipient as they were creditable to the royal giver; but they were ephemeral. Haüy's fame rests upon a higher plane and more solid ground than this. He proved himself worthy of the name of the "father and apostle of the blind;" a reward richer than a crown; a title more truly glorious than that of conqueror.

At about this time Haüy published his "Essay on the Education of the Blind," which was printed under the superintendence of M. Clousier, printer to the king, partly in relief and partly with ink, by his pupils. It is hardly possible to ascertain precisely the proportion of the work performed by the latter. A literal translation of this treatise into English was made by Blacklock, the blind poet. It was first published in 1793, two years after his death, and was chiefly remarkable for its inaccuracies.

The prosperity of the institution continued for about four years longer, at the end of which period its days of adversity and gloom commenced. In 1791, the revolution was fairly inaugurated, and the Philanthropic Society, which had taken charge of this noble enterprise from its inception, was broken up, its members imprisoned, exiled, and many of them subsequently guillotined. On the 21st of July of that year the school for the blind was placed under the care of the state, and on the 28th of September the national assembly passed an act providing for its support. On the 10th Thermidor, anno III., it was reorganized by a decree of the convention, and joined

with the school for the deaf-mutes, the two classes occupying the convent of the Celestins. All yet looked fair for the institution; but the reign of terror soon followed, and philanthropy, which had so lately been the fashion in Paris, gave place to a demoniac and blood-thirsty cruelty which has no parallel in the history of nations. The best blood of France flowed like water, and all thought of humanity seemed banished from the minds of the frantic barbarians who ruled her. Amid all the confusion and discord, Haüy quietly continued his course of instruction, though sorely straitened for the means to sustain the children confided to his care. The government nominally provided for them; but the orders on a bankrupt treasury were nearly worthless. Haüy freely gave up his own little fortune; and when this was gone, with the aid of his pupils, he worked faithfully at the printing-press, procured in their better days, and eked out the means for their existence by issuing the numberless bulletins, hand-bills, *affichés*, and tracts, which so abounded in that period of anarchy. It is said that Haüy for more than a year confined himself to a single meal a day, that his scholars might not starve. In addition to all other misfortunes the union of the blind and the deaf-mutes proved unwise and unblest. The managers quarrelled and conducted matters so badly, that the existence of both schools was in danger. At last this discreditable state of things was terminated by a decree of the national convention, July 27, 1794, which separated the disputants, and placed the deaf-mutes in the seminary of *Saint Magloire* and the blind in the *maison Sainte Catherine, rue des Lombards*. But the suffering, resulting mainly from the want of pecuniary

means, was not ended. It lasted more or less until 1800. During this period of darkness and misery, Haüy had been able, amidst the gigantic difficulties by which he was surrounded, to educate some pupils, whose subsequent renown reflected its splendor upon his patient labors. Among these were Gailliod, the musical composer; Penjon, who afterwards filled the chair of professor of mathematics at the college of Angers for thirty years, with high distinction; and Avisse, whose early death deprived France of one of her sweetest poets.

At length brighter days began to dawn and prosperity seemed about to revisit the sufferers of a whole decade. But in 1801 a terrible blow fell suddenly upon the institution, in comparison with which all its privations and misery seemed light. The consular government decided to incorporate the school for the young blind with the *hospice des Quinze-Vingts*. This establishment, which was founded by Louis IX. in 1260, was a retreat or home for adults; and was occupied at this time by a large number of blind paupers with their families, who were indolent, degraded, depraved and vicious. To place the children, for whom Haüy had sacrificed so much, in constant association with these idle, dissolute and profligate men and women was more than he could bear. Calmly had he endured hunger and privation for their sake, and as cheerfully would he do it again; but to see their minds and morals contaminated and corrupted, their habits of industry and study abandoned, was too much. The government of Bonaparte, however, was inexorable, and Haüy resigned his position. In acknowledgment of his past services, a pension of four hundred dollars was decreed to him.

Unwilling to abandon a class for whom he felt so deep and intense an interest, Haüy opened a private school for the blind, under the title of *Musée des Aveugles.* He maintained it for three years; and in that time educated, among others, two pupils, whose names and reputation are still remembered throughout Europe: Rodenbach, the eloquent writer and eminent statesman of Belgium, who took an active part in the revolution of 1830, and played an important *rôle* in the political arena of his country; and Fournier, hardly less distinguished in France. The undertaking, however, proved pecuniarily unsuccessful; and in 1806, Haüy accepted a pressing invitation from the Czar to establish a school for the blind in his empire. Accompanied by his faithful pupil and constant friend, Fournier, he started for Russia, and on his way thither visited Berlin. Here he was presented to the king of Prussia, who extended to him a cordial and flattering reception, and to whom he exhibited his methods of instruction. On his arrival at St. Petersburg, Haüy organized an institution over which he presided for nine years with great ability.

For thirteen years the place of the "father of the blind" in the school at Paris was supplied by an ignorant instructor named Bertrand, under whom the establishment lost nearly all its early reputation. He died suddenly on the 4th of March, 1814; and in the following month, Dr. Guillié, a man of learning, tact and energy, but harsh, unscrupulous, untruthful and excessively vain, was appointed to his place. As the Bourbons had just returned to France, the new director availed himself of every possible opportunity to bring his pupils under their notice and make known to them their

condition and wants. The government soon became satisfied that a grave error had been committed in the union of the two institutions; and they hastened to rectify it. During the year 1815 ample funds and separate quarters, in the seminary of St. Firmin, *rue St. Victor*, were assigned to the school, which again assumed the title of the *Royal Institution for Blind Youth.* The removal of the establishment to the new building was, however, delayed by the political events of the time until 1816, when Dr. Guillié reörganized it with pomp and parade. He at once expelled forty-three of the pupils, whose morals had been contaminated by their associations at the *maison des Quinze-Vingts.* M. Dufau was appointed second instructor of the boys; and Mlle. Cardeilhac, a young lady distinguished by her youth, proverbial beauty, and accomplishments, as teacher of the girls. Under Dr. Guillié's administration the study of music was in a flourishing condition. He knew how to interest the first artists of the day in his pupils; and procured lessons and counsel gratis from such eminent professors as Jadin, Habeneck, Dacosta, Duport, Perne, Dauprat, Benazet and Vogt. Under these great masters, Marjolin, Charraux, Lamaury, Dupuis, and the *pianiste* Sophie Osmond became veritable artists. But, with this exception, everything else was done for effect and show. Manufactured articles were purchased at the bazaars and were exhibited as the work of the blind children. Greek, Latin, English, German, Italian, and Spanish were professedly taught, and the scholars made glib public recitations in them by the aid of interlinear translations; while at the same time they were not versed even in the elements of arithmetic and history.

The necessary was sacrificed to the superfluous. Add to this flagrant charlatanism Dr. Guillié's malignity and narrowness, and you will have a complete picture of the character of the man. He seemed to regard any reference to Haüy as a personal insult; and forbade the teachers, many of whom had been instructed and trained by him, even to mention the name of their early benefactor. In 1817, Dr. Guillié published the first edition of his *Essai sur l'Instruction des Aveugles*, in the two hundred and forty pages of which he labored studiously wholly to ignore the great services and sacrifices of the noble founder of the institution (alluding to his name only twice *en passant*), and to attribute its origin to Louis XVI.

In the very same year Haüy, feeling the pressure of disease as well as the effects of old age, determined to return to his native land to die. His parting with the Czar Alexander was very affecting. The emperor embraced him repeatedly, and conferred upon him the order of St. Vladimir. On his arrival in Paris, Haüy was domiciled with his brother, the abbé. His heart was, however, overflowing with affection for the school which he had organized, and he hastened, feeble as he was, to pay it a visit. But Dr. Guillié refused him admission, under the sham excuse that, as he had taken an active part in the revolution, it would be displeasing to the royal family to have him recognized. It is difficult to believe that even a Bourbon, imbecile as Louis XVIII. was, could have authorized so contemptible an act. This cruelty, added to numerous other misdeeds of the director, led to such a clamor against Dr. Guillié, that the government was compelled to order an investi-

gation of his management of the institution. After careful and thorough inquiry, the commission appointed for this purpose reported that in every department they had found ample evidence of fraud, humbug, trickery, and deception. This statement was so abundantly illustrated by a detailed array of facts, that the miserable man, finding the poisoned chalice which he had drugged for others commended to his own lips, was fain to resign amid a storm of popular indignation, followed in his retirement by the fair Mademoiselle Cardeilhac, who had often tempered the harshness of the proceedings of her chief, and willingly served as a channel through which his graces descended upon the heads of offenders.

Dr. Guillié was succeeded in February, 1821, by Dr. Pignier, who was a man of truth and honor, but whose education, which had been received entirely in the monkish seminaries, rendered him illiberal, suspicious, and utterly unfit for the post. After reörganizing the school, and adopting regulations which should prevent the repetition of the disgraceful practices of the preceding administration, the new director felt that it was due to Haüy that his eminent services should be recognized by a suitable ovation. Accordingly, on the 22d of August, 1821, a public concert, in his honor, was given at the institution, and the pupils and teachers vied with each other in their expressions of gratitude to the "father of the blind." Songs and choruses, composed for the occasion, commemorated his trials, his hardships and his successes; and, as the good old man, with streaming eyes, witnessed the triumphant results of his early labors, and listened to the expressions of thankfulness, he exclaimed, "Give not the praise to me, my

children; it is God who has done all." It was his last visit to the institution. His health, long feeble, gave way during the succeeding autumn; and, after months of suffering, he died on the 18th of March, 1822, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. Thus ended the career of Valentin Haüy, one of the noblest men and the greatest benefactors of humanity, whose name will always be pronounced with profound veneration among the blind of the civilized world.

Dr. Pignier's administration lasted nineteen years. During this period there were but few innovations made either in the matter or the manner of the instruction in the literary department; but a new era was inaugurated in several other respects. The character of music was entirely changed. The art of tuning as a lucrative employment for the blind was developed and introduced by Montal, one of the pupils, to whom the director, disregarding the clamor and bitter opposition of the seeing tuner hired by the institution, gave first opportunities of studying the construction of the pianoforte, and afterwards the place of teacher; and whose subsequent career as one of the great piano-manufacturers of Paris, and the author of the best manual on tuning, is well known. The system of writing and printing in raised points likewise came into use at this time. It was really invented, in principle, by a seeing man, named Charles Barbier, in 1825; but was improved, perfected and arranged in its present form by a sightless musician, Louis Braille, whose name has been attached to it ever since.

Dr. Guillié, whose principal object was to dazzle the public, considered a fine orchestra and a few brilliant

soloists as the best means for this purpose, and devoted all his energies to its accomplishment. His successor had altogether different views on the subject. Fashioned in religious habits, Dr. Pignier attributed very little importance to secular music, and sought to direct the efforts of his instructors and pupils to that of the church, and most especially to the organ. Thus a great impetus was given in this direction, the result of which was the production of a large number of eminent organists, who found their way into the parochial churches of Paris, and the cathedrals of Blois, Évreux, Limoges, Orléans, Tours, Meaux and Vannes. Among these were Gauthier, who subsequently became principal teacher of music at the institution, and author of a treatise on the "Mechanism of Musical Composition," and of several other works; Marius Gueit, Poissant, Braille, and Moncouteau, who afterwards published a manual on "Musical Composition," and a treatise on "Harmony," which was most favorably commended by several competent musicians, and particularly by Berlioz, the severest critic of the time. Thorough and careful study of the organ, both in theory and practice, has ever since been one of the prominent features of this pioneer institution for the blind; and there are to-day no less than two hundred blind organists and choristers employed in the churches of the capital and the provinces of France. The names of a large number of these are given in full in a pamphlet recently published in Paris by Maurice de la Sizeranne, under the title *Les aveugles utiles.*

The institution was thriving in 1825, when Dr. Pignier spoke with much satisfaction in his report of the effects of the direction which he had given to its affairs,

and earnestly recommended, among other projects, the removal of the establishment to a healthier location and the provision of better accommodations than those which they had in the *rue St. Victor*. But the tide of prosperity and progress seemed to have reached its highest mark at this time; for soon after signs of decadence and retrogression began to appear on all sides, and their sinister work was so rapidly and effectually accomplished, that in 1832 one of the ministers proclaimed from the national tribune that "the condition of the establishment was deplorable in every respect." This state of things continued, only going from bad to worse, for several years. At length the vices and weaknesses of the administration, the want of union among the instructors, and internal quarrels, dissensions, strife, and heart-burnings, brought about such confusion and anarchy that a new organization became inevitable.

On the 20th of May, 1840, M. Dufau, the second instructor, succeeded Dr. Pignier as director. Soon afterwards, the administrative commission, which had managed the establishment since 1814, gave place to an advisory board, consisting of four members. The new director regenerated the institution completely. He modified the somewhat cloistral manners into a life more in harmony with the present state of society; freed the discipline from all elements of arbitrariness and absolutism, and rendered it more liberal; laid anew the foundations of instruction, and restored to the school its old prestige. In 1843, the institution was transferred to its present beautiful building, the corner-stone of which was laid in 1838. The want of harmony existing between the older administration and the or-

ganization which followed it, required new regulations. These were issued in 1845, and have remained in full force ever since.

I have given the history of the pioneer school for the blind at considerably greater length than is admissible in the limits of a brief sketch like this, for three reasons: firstly, on account of the importance of the causes and events which brought it into existence; secondly, on account of the pleasant memories and the noble examples of enthusiasm, self-denial, and disinterestedness which cluster around its infancy; and thirdly, because it served more or less as a model in the formation of similar establishments all over the civilized world. This last fact renders a thorough knowledge of the details of its rise and development indispensable to all who labor in the same field; but particularly to those who are earnestly endeavoring to clear that field from chronic errors, weed out abuses, and rid it of all parasitical evils and noxious plants.

IV. — Schools for the Blind in Great Britain and Europe.

The seeds of Haüy's marvellous creation were sown everywhere, and schools for the blind sprang up first in England, and afterwards in all the principal countries of Europe.

The second institution for sightless children, in point of time, was founded in Liverpool, in 1791, by Mr. Pudsey Dawson, who died in 1816. It was supported by subscriptions, donations, and legacies, and its object was to teach poor blind children to work at trades, to sing in church, and to play the organ. Literary education was not included within its scope.

Dr. Blacklock, of Edinburgh, had often wished to erect a school for children similarly afflicted with himself, and communicated his views on the subject to Mr. David Miller, who was also blind from birth, and a competent instructor. It was for this purpose that Dr. Blacklock made a careful study of Haüy's methods, and even translated his famous essay; but he took no steps toward carrying out his intention. After Dr. Blacklock's death, which occurred in 1791, Mr. Miller enlisted the interest of Dr. David Johnston in the enterprise, and through their combined efforts the project was placed before the public, and the necessary means were raised for the foundation of a school, which was opened in 1793 with nine pupils. Mr. Robert Johnston, the secretary of the establishment, devoted his energies to its welfare and prosperity, and Dr. Henry Moyes, the celebrated blind professor of philosophy and natural history in Edinburgh, announced a public *séance* in behalf of his fellow-sufferers, which was attended by a large number of the best citizens, and proved remarkably successful in a pecuniary point of view.

At about the same time the Bristol asylum and industrial school for the blind was established, the object of which was to teach sightless children such handicraft as would enable them to earn their own living.

In 1799, Messrs. Ware, Bosanquet, Boddington, and Houlston founded a similar institution in London, which, in 1800, had only fifteen inmates, and attracted very little attention. Subsequently generous subscriptions poured into its treasury, and the school at St. George's in the Fields increased both in numbers and usefulness.

The next institution for the blind in Great Britain

was organized at Norwich, in 1805. It was a blind man named Tawell, who not only inaugurated a public movement, but ceded a house with the surrounding grounds for this purpose.

Similar establishments were afterwards founded in Glasgow, York, Manchester, and elsewhere; but most of the British schools for the blind have never taken a high stand in their literary or musical training.

At the beginning of the present century institutions for the blind were established in various parts of Europe in the following order: that of Vienna in 1804, by Dr. Klein, who was its director for about fifty years; that of Berlin, — the soil for which was thoroughly prepared by Haüy himself while on his way to Russia, — in 1806, under the superintendence of Herr Zeune, and that of Amsterdam in 1808, by an association of freemasons. In the same year, two more institutions were founded: that of Prague, by a charitable society, and that of Dresden. In 1809, Haüy put the school in St. Petersburg in operation, and Dr. Hirzel organized that of Zürich. Two years later an institution for the blind was established at Copenhagen by the *society of the chain*, an organization similar to that of the freemasons; and many others soon after followed.

The schools for the blind on the continent were mainly fashioned after the model set by Haüy in Paris. Dr. Klein, the blind founder of the Vienna institution, claimed that the idea of arranging a system of education for his companions in misfortune, and the processes for carrying it out, originated with him without any previous knowledge of what had been done elsewhere in this direction. A writer in the *Encyclopédie Théologique*

remarks, that "pretensions of this kind are not new," and asks, "How could Dr. Klein be ignorant in 1804 of a creation so original as that of Haüy, which was demonstrated in 1784?" Other French authors do not dispute the truthfulness of the statement. It is hardly necessary for us to enter into a further discussion on this point. We cannot refrain from saying, however, that it is a common practice in our days with unscrupulous men of small mental calibre and doubtful veracity to lay claim to inventions and processes for the blind which were conceived and publicly tried by others within a stone's throw of their abode several years before they ever dreamed of them.

Some of the European institutions were founded in a moment of passing enthusiasm; but, like seed thrown upon the rock, they found no genial earth whence to draw the necessary vital elements for their development, and have sadly dwindled. Others, though planted in a propitious soil, and watered by copious showers of patronage, have not attained that lofty and luxuriant growth which their nature seemed to promise at first.

V. — Foundation of the New England Institution.

The first attempts to educate the blind on this side of the Atlantic were made in Boston, and the merit of proposing the establishment of an institution for their instruction and training belongs to Dr. John D. Fisher of this city. While pursuing his medical studies in Paris, he paid frequent visits to the royal institution for the young blind, and conceived the design of transplanting to his own country the advantages there enjoyed. After his return to Boston, in 1826, he kept the matter

constantly in view, and opened a correspondence with Mr. Robert Johnston, secretary of the asylum for the blind in Edinburgh, Scotland. Many other Americans had, it is true, visited these beneficent establishments of the old world, and on their return had delighted their friends with the details of the curious methods of instruction and training therein pursued; but none of them had ever before this time attempted, by appeals to the public or otherwise, to bring these means within the reach of the blind of the new world.

Having consulted with his friends on the subject, Dr. Fisher was advised to call a meeting of such persons as it was supposed would favor the plan and take an interest in promoting it. This meeting was held on the 10th of February, 1829, at the Exchange Coffee-house. The legislature being in session, many representatives from various parts of the commonwealth were in attendance. The Hon. Robert Rantoul of Beverly, a member of the house, was appointed chairman, and Charles H. Locke, of Boston, secretary. At this meeting Dr. Fisher gave a detailed and minute account of the several processes employed to communicate knowledge to the blind; described the various manufactures by which they were enabled to obtain a livelihood, and exhibited specimens of embossed books printed for their use. His statements excited a deep interest in all present, and remarks were made by Mr. Edward Brooks of Boston, Mr. Stephen Phillips of Salem, Mr. Caleb Cushing of Newburyport, and Hon. William B. Calhoun of Springfield, speaker of the house, expressive of their warm approbation of the design and of the usefulness of such an institution. On motion of Dr.

Fisher, it was then voted, "that a committee be appointed to consider what measures should be adopted to promote the establishment of an institution for the blind of New England;" and the following gentlemen were accordingly appointed: — Hon. Jonathan Phillips, Mr. Theodore Sedgwick, Mr. Richard D. Tucker, Mr. Edward Brooks, and Dr. John D. Fisher.

At an adjourned meeting held on the 19th of February, at the representatives' hall in the state-house, the above-named committee made a report, which closed with the following resolution: —

"*Resolved*, that we are impressed with a deep sense of the utility of institutions for the education of the blind, and that a committee be appointed to take all measures necessary for the establishment of such an institution for the blind of New England."

After the reading of the report, Dr. Fisher repeated the statements which he had made at the previous meeting. The nature and object of the proposed institution were explained and recommended by Mr. Edward Brooks and Mr. Theodore Sedgwick of Stockbridge. The above resolution was then unanimously adopted, and the following gentlemen were put on the committee: — Hon. Jonathan Phillips, Mr. Richard D. Tucker, Mr. Edward Brooks, Mr. Theodore Sedgwick, Dr. John D. Fisher, Hon. William B. Calhoun, Mr. Stephen C. Phillips, Mr. George Bond, Mr. Samuel M. M'Kay, Hon. Josiah J. Fiske, Mr. Isaac L. Hedge, Dr. John Homans, and Hon. William Thorndike.

This committee applied immediately to the legislature for an act of incorporation, which was granted unanimously in both houses without debate. The act

is dated March 2, 1829. The name of the corporation was "*The New England Asylum for the Blind*," and the purpose of its formation was to educate sightless persons. Hon. Jonathan Phillips, of Boston, was authorized by the act to call the first meeting of the corporation, by giving three weeks' notice in three of the Boston newspapers. The legislature passed, moreover, a resolve directing the secretary of state to send circulars to the several towns, to ascertain the number of blind persons in the commonwealth, and their condition.

The corporation thus formed proceeded somewhat slowly in organizing and starting this new enterprise, and for more than two years little progress was apparently made. Its first meeting, which was held at the Marlborough House, April 17, 1829, resulted in the acceptance of the act of incorporation granted by the legislature, and the appointment of a committee to prepare by-laws and an address to be circulated in its behalf. Two subsequent meetings were held during the same year, at the Exchange Coffee-house, at which a set of by-laws was adopted, and measures were taken for obtaining reliable information as to the number and condition of the blind in the city of Boston and throughout the state of Massachusetts. In the following year, the corporation elected its first board of officers, consisting of the following gentlemen: — Hon. Jonathan Phillips, *president;* Hon. William B. Calhoun, *vice-president;* Mr. Richard D. Tucker, *treasurer;* Mr. Charles H. Locke, *secretary;* Dr. John D. Fisher, Dr. John Homans, and Messrs. Joseph Coolidge, Pliny Cutler, William H. Prescott, Samuel T. Armstrong,

Edward Brooks, and Stephen C. Phillips, *trustees.* In accordance with the act of incorporation, four other trustees were chosen by the state board of visitors, consisting of the governor, the lieutenant-governor, the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the chaplains of the legislature. A motion was made to change the name of the corporation from that of the *New England Asylum for the Blind*, to the *American Asylum for the Blind;* but after discussion it was withdrawn. Meanwhile Dr. Fisher, who had been foremost in promoting this noble enterprise, being unable to engage in it personally, had enlisted the sympathy and coöperation of Dr. Samuel G. Howe, who had just returned from the scenes of his philanthropic mission and military exploits in Greece. A small fund for commencing the work had been provided by the legislature, which, by a resolve of March 9, 1830, allowed to the institution for the blind the unexpended balance of the appropriation for the deaf-mutes at the Hartford asylum; and on the 18th of August, 1831, the trustees entered into an agreement with Dr. Howe, by which he was engaged as "principal" or "superintendent" of the asylum for the education of blind persons. In article III. of this contract he was intrusted as follows: — "The first duty of Dr. Howe will be to embark for Europe, in order to make himself fully acquainted with the mode of conducting such institutions; to procure one, or at most two, instructed blind as assistant teachers; also, the necessary apparatus."

In accordance with these instructions, Dr. Howe immediately sailed for Europe, where he visited and care-

fully studied all the principal institutions for the blind; and in his report to the trustees he says that he "found in all much to admire and copy, but also much to avoid." On the whole, however, he "considered them as beacons to warn rather than as lights to guide." In an article on the education of the blind, published by him two years later in the "North American Review," he criticized their work at some length, and said that "the school of Edinburgh was decidedly of a higher order than any other in Great Britain." Of that of Paris his impressions were very unfavorable, and were expressed as follows: "There pervades that establishment a spirit of illiberality, of mysticism, amounting almost to charlatanism, that ill accords with the well-known liberality of most French institutions. There is a ridiculous attempt at mystery, — an effort at show and parade, which injure the establishment in the minds of men of sense. Instead of throwing wide open the door of knowledge, and inviting the scrutiny and the suggestions of every friend of humanity, the process of education is not explained, and the method of constructing some of the apparatus is absolutely kept a secret. We say this from personal knowledge."

Dr. Howe returned to Boston in July of 1832, bringing with him, as assistants, Mr. Émile Trencheri, a graduate of the Paris school, as literary teacher, and Mr. John Pringle, of the Edinburgh institution, as master of handicrafts. In August of the same year he opened a school at his father's residence, No. 144 Pleasant street, having as pupils six "blind persons from different parts of the state, varying in age from six to twenty years." These scholars had been under instruc-

tion five months, and had already learned to read embossed print; had made considerable progress in the study of geography from maps in relief, in arithmetic, and in music, when a memorial was presented to the legislature, in January, 1833, setting forth the condition and wants of the institution and praying for aid. At the annual meeting of the corporation in that year, Dr. Howe was elected secretary, and this office, together with that of superintendent, or "director," of the institution, he held from that time until his death in 1876, a period of forty-three years.

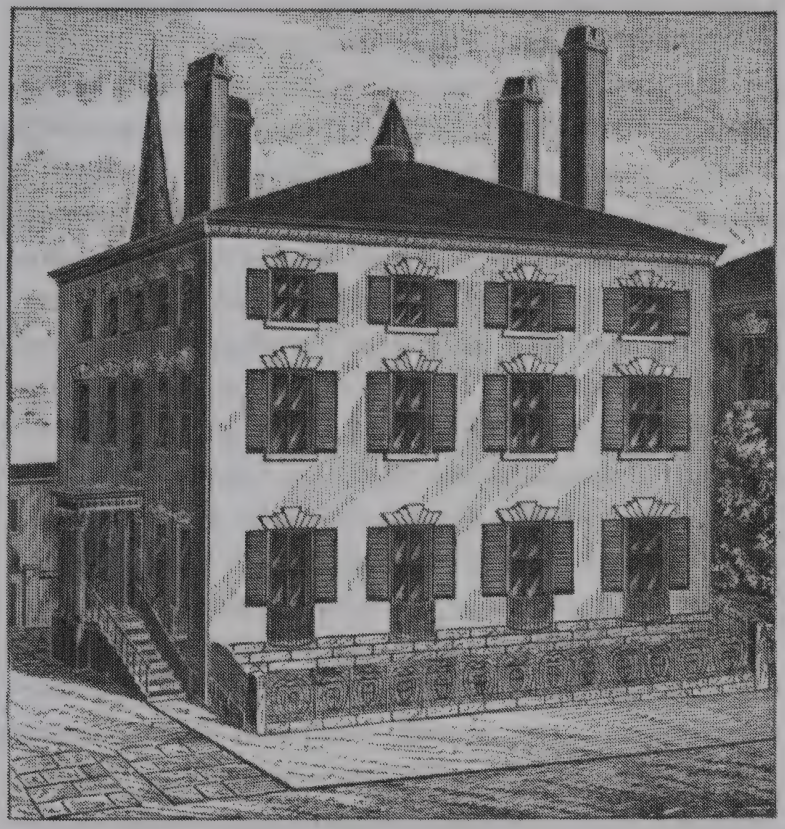
Early in the year 1833, the half-dozen pupils with whom Dr. Howe had commenced the experiment of teaching sightless children exhibited the results of their six months' tuition before the legislature of Massachusetts, and the practicability of educating the blind was so satisfactorily proved by their performances, that the general court at once made an appropriation of six thousand dollars per annum to the institution, on condition that it should receive and educate, free of cost, twenty poor blind persons belonging to the state. A number of public exhibitions were given in Boston, Salem, and elsewhere, and an address, containing much valuable information collected by Dr. Howe while in Europe, was widely circulated. The result of these efforts was far more favorable than had been expected, and the interest and sympathy of the community were so thoroughly roused and excited, that subscriptions and donations were freely given. The ladies of Salem first suggested the idea of a fair; and, assisted by those of Marblehead and Newburyport, they got up a splendid *fête*, which, besides calling forth a display of all the

energy of female character and all the kindlier feelings of the human heart, resulted in a net profit of $2,980. Resolving not to be outdone, the ladies of Boston entered the field with great ardor, and, persevering for several weeks, they opened a bazaar on the first of May, in Faneuil Hall, which exceeded in splendor and taste anything of the kind ever got up in this, or perhaps in any other, country. A vivid description of the fair, from the pen of Dr. Howe, was published in the "New England Magazine," and its net profits amounted to $11,400.

The institution had now taken firm hold upon the sympathies of a generous public, and it needed something to call forth and direct its expression; this was the donation of Col. Thomas H. Perkins of his mansion-house and grounds on Pearl street, valued at twenty-five thousand dollars, for a permanent location for the school, provided that a fund of fifty thousand dollars could be raised. The following imperfect cut of the mansion is copied from the "Penny Magazine for Useful Knowledge."

The liberal spirit of Col. Perkins was so warmly seconded by the community, that within one month the sum of fifty thousand dollars was contributed. Exhibitions were also given in other states, and the legislature of Connecticut voted an appropriation of one thousand dollars per annum, for twelve years, for as many blind children as could be educated for that sum; Vermont made an appropriation of twelve hundred dollars, for ten years; and New Hampshire a temporary appropriation of five hundred dollars. The states of Maine and Rhode Island afterwards adopted a similar

course, and thus the institution at Boston became the educational establishment for the blind of all the New England states, as the asylum at Hartford already was for the deaf-mutes.



MANSION-HOUSE AND GROUNDS OF COL. THOMAS H. PERKINS.

Sufficient means to insure the permanent establishment of the school having been thus provided, such alterations as were necessary to accommodate a large number of pupils were made upon the premises in Pearl street, and an adjoining estate was purchased, which was much needed for a play-ground. By this addition the corporation became owners of the whole

square between Pearl and Atkinson streets. The institution was advertised as open to pupils from all parts of the country, and the little school already opened at Dr. Howe's residence was removed to its new home in September, 1833. At the close of the year the number of pupils had increased to thirty-four.

The school being now well established, and in a condition of vigorous growth, Dr. Howe began to devote himself to the study and improvement of the means and appliances for teaching the blind. By his own exertions he raised subscriptions for a printing-fund; and, after many and costly experiments with the ordinary printing-press, a new one, especially adapted to the work of embossing books for the blind, was obtained at considerable expense. A series of experiments made by the doctor in arranging an alphabet legible to the touch, resulted in the adoption of a slight modification of the ordinary Roman letter of the lower-case; and this has been known as the Boston type. This was the first printing-office for the blind opened in any American institution; and its work was so actively carried on that very flattering testimonials of its worth were soon received in the shape of orders from England, Ireland and Holland. The British and Foreign Bible society ordered a complete edition of the book of psalms, for which they paid seven hundred and fifty dollars. The exertions of Dr. Howe to establish a printing-fund for the blind on a solid and permanent basis were incessant and unwearied, in season and out of season. For this end he visited Washington with three of his pupils, whose attainments he exhibited to the members of congress, hoping to induce them to found a national printing-establishment

for the blind. Failing in his first effort, he organized a second visit to Washington in 1846, accompanied by the superintendents and select scholars of the institutions of New York and Philadelphia, as well as pupils from this school, and proposed to congress either to give a portion of the fund of the Smithsonian Institute for this purpose, or to make an endowment similar to that received by the asylum for deaf-mutes at Hartford. The prospects looked hopeful for the accomplishment of so great and noble an end, when the darkening of the political horizon by the breaking out of the Mexican war precluded the furtherance of the enterprise by the entire engrossment of congress in that momentous subject.

Instruction in the literary department of the institution included not only the simple branches of a common-school education, but some of the higher mathematics, a knowledge of history, astronomy and natural philosophy; and the study of languages was early introduced. In addition to vocal music and instruction upon the piano and organ, the foundation for an orchestra was immediately commenced. The tuning of pianofortes was taught as a practical employment, and a mechanical department was opened for male pupils, in which they learned to manufacture mattresses, cushions, mats and baskets; while the girls were taught sewing, knitting, braiding, and some household duties.

The institution grew so rapidly that within a short time increased accommodations were necessary; and a new wing, as extensive as the original building, was erected in 1835.

The state continued its annual appropriation for its

beneficiaries; and upon this the institution was mainly dependent for the means of meeting its current expenses. This income was, however, supplemented by the smaller appropriations made by the other New England states, by fees received from private pupils (some of whom came from distant parts of the country), by donations, and an occasional legacy.

In 1839, an opportunity occurred for advantageously changing the location of the establishment. The Mount Washington House, on Dorchester Heights, at South Boston, was thrown into the market; and Col. Perkins having very generously and promptly withdrawn all the conditions and restrictions attached to the gift of his mansion for a permanent residence for the blind, an even exchange of the Pearl street estate for the Mount Washington House was effected. In grateful appreciation of the liberality of Col. Perkins, not only in his first gift, but also in the alacrity with which he withdrew all its restrictions when they became a hindrance to the growth of the institution, the trustees desired to connect his name permanently with the establishment, and accordingly, at their recommendation, the corporation passed, at a meeting held March 15, 1839, a resolve, "*That from and after the first day of April next, this institution shall be called and known by the name of the* PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND."

The establishment was removed to the new premises in South Boston in May, 1839. The elevated situation, the abundance of open ground in the neighborhood, the unobstructed streets, and the facilities for sea-bathing, made this change of location highly desirable on account

of its superior healthfulness; and the spacious building, which afforded large and airy rooms for the various needs of the school, and gave ample space, not only for a large increase in the number of pupils, but also for entirely separate arrangements for each sex, combined to render it such an acquisition as the best friends of the institution would desire, but such as the most sanguine would scarcely have dared to hope for.

PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND.

In 1840, an additional department was opened "for the purpose of providing employment for those pupils who have acquired their education and learned to work, but who could not find employment or carry on business alone." The making, cleansing and renovating of beds, mattresses and cushions; the manufacture of mats and brooms and cane-seating chairs, were the occupations chosen as those in which the blind could best compete with seeing workmen. In reference to the need of such a department, the trustees in their annual report wrote as follows: —

"Many a blind person has acquired a knowledge of some handicraft, but he cannot work at it as seeing workmen do, or be employed in a common workshop. He has no capital, perhaps, and cannot buy materials, or wait uncertain times for the sales, and he is idle. It is for the sake of such persons, and we are happy to say, that a separate work department has been opened during the past year; and a beginning made of an establishment which, if successful, will become of great value to the blind."

The test of years proved this department to be a valuable auxiliary in assisting the blind to self-maintenance, not only by furnishing the necessary aid by which many of the adult pupils could carry on their trades in fair competition with ordinary workmen, but also in providing for another class, who had hitherto been left uncared for, viz., those who, dependent upon manual labor for self-support, had by accident or sickness been deprived of sight at too advanced an age to enter the school as ordinary pupils. To many such persons the opportunity thus afforded for learning a trade was their only salvation from pauperism.

At about this period the several departments of the school were arrayed in admirable working order, and promised good harvest. That of music — in which the seeds of excellence were planted and fostered by such eminent professors as Lowell Mason, Joseph A. Keller, and later by H. Theodore Hach — had entered upon that career of beneficence which it has so long and so fully sustained; while a number of young men and women were remarkably successful in the field of literature, and some of the former were preparing to enter one or two of the leading colleges of New England.

The evils attendant upon congregating together so many persons laboring under a common infirmity were perceived at an early date in the history of this institution, and the unfavorable effects were especially felt in connection with the industrial department. The result was that the first steps towards correcting this evil were taken in 1850; when, a new workshop having been erected (partly by a special appropriation of the state and partly at the expense of the institution), the adult blind were entirely removed from the building and scattered about the neighborhood, boarding in different families where they could find accommodation, and going daily to the shop like ordinary workmen. They were paid regularly every month, and their wages were usually sufficient, by prudent management, for their support. Some who could work successfully in their own neighborhoods were aided by the purchase of stock for their use, and by the privilege of leaving their goods for sale at the store opened in the city mainly for the benefit of this department. Those who, from loss of sight in later life, entered the workshop to learn some kind of handicraft were expected to pay the cost of their board until the trade was acquired; after which, if they remained, they received wages in proportion to the character of their work. The workshop for the pupils, however, continued to be carried on within the walls of the institution.

The industrial department for adults furnished employment mainly to men, and having proved so successful after a trial of many years, it was thought advisable, in order to meet the great need of more occupations for blind women, to try the experiment of a laundry conducted on the same plan. Accordingly, in 1863, a build-

ing was hired for the purpose and a laundry opened, which, in addition to the washing and ironing for the institution, and for the school for feeble-minded youth, also sought the patronage of private families. The experiment was continued for nearly five years; but much seeing help was needed to secure the satisfactory performance of the finer parts of the work furnished by customers, and the cost of their services left so small a sum for the wages of the blind women, that the scheme was abandoned as impracticable, save for doing the work of the institution.

The evils of the congregate system were more and more felt as years went on and the growth of the establishment increased. The subject of reörganizing the institution by building several dwelling-houses and dividing the blind into families had been repeatedly discussed in the annual reports for several years, and a claim for an appropriation for buildings was urged upon the attention of the legislature. With the exception of five thousand dollars toward the erection of the new workshop, in 1850, the state had furnished no means for building purposes until, by a resolve of 1868, the sum of fifteen thousand dollars "was allowed for buildings, — workshop, laundry, etc., — to be paid when a similar sum had actually been raised by the friends of the institution." But as the experiment of a public laundry was abandoned, and the building would soon demand such extensive repairs and alterations as would far exceed the appropriation, it was decided to let this remain until a sufficient sum could be raised for such new buildings, alterations, and improvements as the proper reörganization of the school demanded. Accordingly the trustees applied to the legislature, and

their petition was referred to the committee on charitable institutions, who reported unanimously in its favor, urging the claim as follows: —

"It would be a waste of words to urge the claim which blind children have for a full share of the means of instruction which the state accords to all the young. They have even stronger claims than common children; they carry a burden in their infirmity, because they come mostly of poor and humble parents; and because, without special instruction and training, they are almost certain, sooner or later, to become a public charge. All children have a right to instruction. The children of the rich are sure to get it; and the state is bound, alike by duty and interest, to see that none lacks the means of obtaining it. . . .

"The trustees ask that the commonwealth will furnish them with the means of educating her blind children in some slight degree proportionate to the means she has so liberally furnished for educating her seeing children. They do not ask it as a charity, but they expect it as a part of the obligation early assumed to educate every son and daughter of the commonwealth. For her seeing children Massachusetts opens primary, grammar and high schools. Every town is required by law to provide adequate instruction, free, for all seeing children of suitable age. . . .

"We believe that blind children have the same claim upon the state for education as seeing children, and that their needs are greater; that the commonwealth owes to her blind children the opportunities for better education than those hitherto enjoyed, which have been confined almost entirely to merely elementary studies; that she is abundantly able to furnish them means, and cannot afford to withhold them; that she has an institution where these children can be educated more cheaply and more successfully than in any other institution in the world, and that every consideration of economy and of humanity appeals to the legislature to place at the disposal of the trustees of this institution the means of increasing its usefulness, and of enlarging and perfecting the efforts which have made the Massachusetts institution for the blind an honor to the commonwealth and a blessing to mankind."

This report closed with the following resolve, which, as here amended, passed both branches of the legislature unanimously: —

"*Resolved*, That there be allowed and paid to the trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind the sum of eighty thousand dollars, and the same is hereby appropriated, for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings for the use of the institution, the same to be paid from time to time in instalments, as may be certified to be necessary by the trustees: *provided*, that no portion of the said sum shall be paid until the said trustees shall have conveyed to the commonwealth, by a good and sufficient deed, and free from all incumbrances, the land on which the buildings to be erected shall stand, and so much adjacent thereto as the governor and council shall require; and until the plans for said buildings shall have been approved by the governor and council."

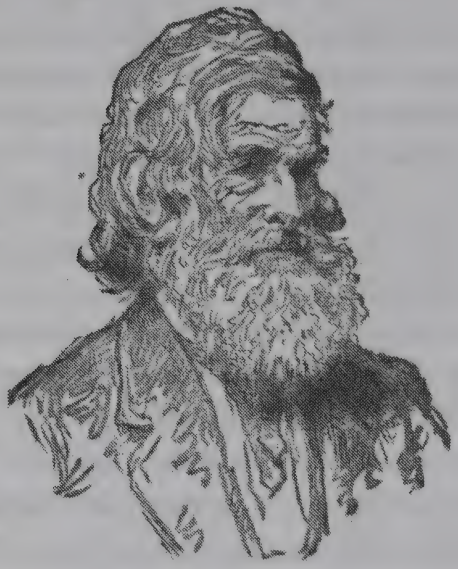
This resolve was passed in 1869, and in accordance with its terms the corporation deeded the required portion of land to the commonwealth. But the sum granted was insufficient to accomplish all the necessary changes, and in order to meet the conditions of the appropriation of fifteen thousand dollars made in the preceding year, contributions to a similar amount were raised among the friends of the blind. The plans for buildings were prepared, submitted to the governor and council, and approved by them, and the work was soon commenced. Four dwelling-houses were erected on Fourth street, and a schoolhouse, with recitation and music-rooms, was built at a convenient distance. The premises occupied by the new buildings were divided from those on which the old structure stood by a fence. This arrangement afforded easy and pleasant means for entire separation of the sexes. The cottages, with the

new schoolhouse, were occupied by the girls, who were gradually arranged into four distinct families, while the main building was entirely devoted to the use of the boys. An attempt was made to classify the latter, as far as the internal conveniences of the house permitted, by dividing them into small families, each group having a particular flat for sleeping chambers and the like, and separate tables in the dining-rooms. Though this arrangement could not be as satisfactorily carried out as in the girls' department, it was a great improvement upon the preceding one.

The buildings having been entirely completed, the institution was reorganized upon the new system in October, 1870; and the experience of the past eleven years has proved the sagacity, foresight and broad-mindedness of its great founder and benefactor, who strove persistently to the very last day of his noble career to reform traditional evils and bring about a new order of things more in harmony with advanced civilization and the long-cherished idea of a home.

By the death of Dr. Howe, which took place on the 9th of January, 1876, the institution lost not merely its director, but its lifelong friend and champion. He had devoted himself to the cause of the blind in the zeal and enthusiasm of early manhood; he had given to it the wisdom and experience of his mature years, and it continued to be the object of his tenderest care until the end of his life. He had organized the first attempts in this country to educate the blind, and had not only arranged for them a system of instruction and training imbued with the spirit of manliness and progress, and calculated to raise their social and moral status, but had

pleaded their cause in fifteen states with the eloquence of earnestness and with remarkable success. He appeared before the legislatures and other notable assemblies in



DR. HOWE.

Ohio, Virginia, South Carolina, and Kentucky, and his addresses, with the performances of three of his first pupils, — Sophia and Abby Carter and Joseph B. Smith, — were so effective, that provision for the education of the blind was made in those states before the representatives of the people had time to wipe the tears from their eyes. In order to promote the interests of the class to whose welfare he devoted his best energies, he addressed large audiences, and exhibited before them the attainments of his pupils, not only in most of the cities of New England, but in New York, Washington, Baltimore, Augusta (Georgia), Louisville, and later in several places in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in Canada. Words with Dr. Howe were as sparingly used

as the few tools around the mason — his trowel, hammer, and mortar — when he raises the substantial fabric of wall or house; but those which he employed seemed as if they were forged in the fire of his enthusiasm and made resistless. He was tireless in his endeavors for the amelioration of the condition of the blind, and his achievements in their behalf will always stand out like the majestic purple of the clouds against the azure sky of philanthropy. When the experience of years and the growth of the school under his immediate care demanded improved methods, Dr. Howe was among the first to "read the signs of the times," and reörganized his work upon a better system. During the later years of his life he labored especially to remove the school from the class of charitable institutions, and to put it on the same footing with other educational establishments. His work was taken up and carried on in the same spirit, and the final act necessary to remove from it entirely the idea of an asylum was accomplished when, at a meeting of the corporation held Oct. 3, 1877, it was "*Voted*, that the institution shall hereafter be called and known by the name of PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND."

The means for the support of the establishment are supplied by the same sources as when first established. The state of Massachusetts gradually increased its annual appropriation from six thousand dollars in 1833 to thirty thousand dollars in 1869. The other New England states continue to pay in proportion to the number of their pupils; and friends of the blind have aided from time to time by donations and bequests.

The character of the institution has always been that

of a school for blind youth of both sexes. Its main object has been from the beginning to furnish them with the means and facilities for a thorough practical education, and thus to enable them to depend upon their own exertions for their support, and to become useful and happy members of society. To compass this end a system of instruction was gradually arranged which, although not differing in its principal features from those employed in educational establishments for seeing youth, was, in some of its details, better adapted to the requirements of the class of children for whose special benefit it was intended. This system was sound in principle, practical in its methods, broad in its purposes, and liberal in its policy. It aimed at the full development of the energies and capacities of the blind, and embraced the following instrumentalities: —

First, instruction in such branches of study as constitute the curriculum of our best common schools and academies.

Secondly, lessons and practice in music, both vocal and instrumental.

Thirdly, systematic instruction in the theory and practice of the art of tuning pianofortes.

Fourthly, training in one or more simple trades, and work at some mechanical or domestic occupation.

Fifthly, regular gymnastic drill under the care of competent teachers, and plenty of exercise in the open air.

The main object of this comprehensive system was to unfold the mental faculties and strengthen the bodily powers of the blind in definite order; to cultivate in them the æsthetic element and prepare them for liberal

professions; to train them up in industrious and virtuous habits; to develop to the utmost extent all their faculties and aptitudes; and lastly, to make them hardy and self-reliant, so that they might go out into the world, not to eat the bread of charity, but to earn a livelihood by honest work. A comparison of the present condition of the blind of New England with that of fifty years ago will show that this system has proved a complete success and produced abundant fruit, and that the institution, conceived in the benevolence of the citizens of Boston, and nurtured by the tender and fostering care of such distinguished men as Jonathan Phillips, Peter C. Brooks, Thomas H. Perkins, Samuel Appleton, Samuel May, Edward Brooks, William Oliver, and a host of others, has kindled in America the Promethean fire of enlightenment for the sightless, and wrought a wonderful revolution in the realm of humanity.

VI. — Instruction and Training of Laura Bridgman.

An account of this institution would be incomplete if it failed to mention the remarkable success achieved in the education of Laura Bridgman. Cases of combined loss (or lack) of sight, hearing and speech are so extremely rare, that able writers and philosophers had discussed the possibility of teaching beings so deprived of the senses necessary for communion with their fellows any systematic language for such intercourse. But no such person seems to have come to the knowledge of these teachers and philosophers, and it was considered an open question whether such education were possible, when Dr. Howe, having found "in a little village in the mountains a pretty and lively girl about six years old,

who was totally blind and deaf, and who had only a very indistinct sense of smell," resolved to try the experiment of establishing a means of communication between the human soul thus buried in darkness and silence and the world outside.

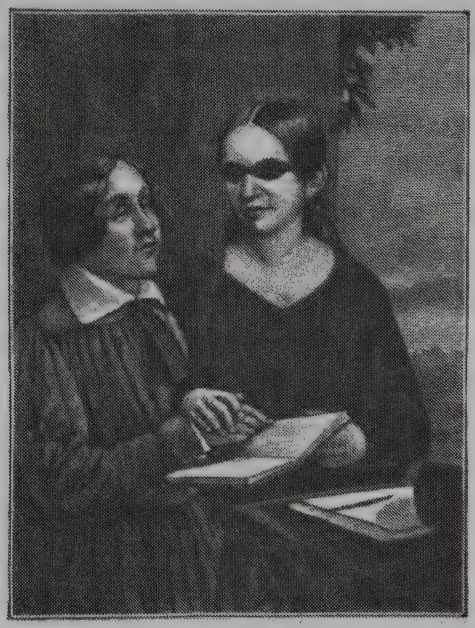
Laura Bridgman was born at Hanover, N.H., Dec. 21, 1829. She was a bright, pretty infant, but very delicate, and subject to fits until she was eighteen months old, when her health began to improve, and at two years of age she was an active, intelligent and healthy child. She was then suddenly prostrated by a fever, which raged violently for seven weeks, and deprived her entirely of the senses of sight and hearing, and blunted those of taste and smell. For five months she lay in a darkened room; and two years had passed before her health was fully restored. Though thus deprived of most of the usual means of communication with others, she was interested in things about her, and showed a desire to learn. She soon began to make a language of her own; and had a sign to indicate her recognition of each member of the family. Her power of imitation led her to repeat what others did, and by means of this faculty she had learned to sew a little, and to knit. When Dr. Howe first saw her, he described her as having "a well-formed figure; a strongly-marked, nervous-sanguine temperament; a large and beautifully-shaped head; and the whole system in healthy action." Her parents were willing to allow the trial of Dr. Howe's plan of teaching their unfortunate child, and on the 4th of October, 1837, she was brought to the institution.

The first lessons were given by taking small articles

of common use, such as a *key*, a *pen*, etc., having labels pasted upon them with their names in raised letters, and allowing her to feel of these very carefully, over and over again, until she came to associate the word thus printed with the article itself; and when shown the name apart from the object, would at once bring the object which the name called for. In order to teach her the value of the individual letters of which these names were composed, short monosyllabic words were first selected, such as *pin* and *pen;* and by repeatedly examining these, she came to perceive that they consisted of three separate signs or characters, and that the middle sign of one differed from the middle sign of the other. The task of teaching these early lessons was a very slow one; but Laura began by being a willing and patient imitator, even before she had any conception of the meaning or object of these lessons; and when, by degrees, some idea of their signification dawned upon her, her delight was so unmistakably manifested, and her zeal and interest became so great, that the slow process became a pleasant work. After learning to associate the printed names upon the labels with the articles, the letters were given her on detached pieces of paper, and she was taught to arrange them so as to spell the words which she had already learned upon the labels. She was next supplied with a set of metal types with the letters of the alphabet cast upon their ends, and a board containing square holes, into which the types could be set, so that only the letters upon the ends could be felt above the surface; and with these she soon learned to spell the words which she knew, as she had with the paper slips. After several

weeks of this practice she was taught to make the different letters by the position of her fingers, and thus dispense with the more cumbrous aid of board and types. About three months were spent in thus teaching her the names of some common objects, and the means of expressing them by setting up type, or by the manual alphabet. She was so eager to learn the name of every object with which she came in contact that much time was spent in teaching her these. Next came words expressing positive qualities; then the use of prepositions; and she easily acquired the use of some active verbs, such as to *walk*, to *run*, to *sew*, etc., although the distinctions of mood and tense came later. The process of teaching was necessarily so slow, that, notwithstanding the unusual quickness of apprehension and eagerness to learn, she had attained only about the same command of language as that possessed by ordinary children at three years of age when she had been under instruction twenty-six months, and was ten years old. But as she now possessed the means for the acquirement of all knowledge, and she became capable of expressing her own thoughts, feelings and impressions, the process of teaching her and watching the development of her moral and intellectual nature became more and more interesting. Her sense of touch became more acute, and there was some improvement in the senses of taste and smell. Laura seems to have possessed an innate love of neatness and modesty which, even in early childhood, prevented her from ever transgressing the rules of propriety. She had a bright and sunny disposition, which delighted in fun and merriment; an affectionate and sympathetic nature, and a ready confi-

dence in others; and her conscientiousness and love of truth were early developed. When she had acquired a sufficient command of language to converse freely by means of the manual alphabet, her circle of friends and acquaintances began to enlarge, and the development of her character was greatly aided by coming into contact with a variety of persons. A few years later she took



LAURA BRIDGMAN TEACHING OLIVER CASWELL TO READ EMBOSSED PRINT.

great interest in assisting in the education of Oliver Caswell, who was similarly afflicted with herself. By the special teaching adapted to her condition, Laura has acquired a good education, and is very skilful in many of the employments of women: such as sewing (both by hand and by machine), knitting, crocheting, and some fancy work; and she is also capable of performing many household duties. She is very intelligent, and fond of

reading and of social intercourse; and, notwithstanding the isolation which her lack of sight, hearing and speech necessarily involves, her life is an industrious and a happy one.

Dr. Howe watched and guided the development of this little shut-in human treasure with a father's care from the beginning. She was never absent from his thoughts; and to her training he devoted the best and freshest powers of his mind and life. Laura, as the first-fruits of his genius, commanded his time, his energies and his attention; but, like other great architects, he also employed the assistance of skilled workmen, and Laura had, on the whole, good and efficient teachers, of whom the one distinguished by breadth of mind and capacity for carrying out the work so wonderfully begun by his creative mind was Miss Wight, afterward the wife of Mr. George Bond.

VII.—Establishment of other Institutions in America.

Even as the Paris school served as a model and stimulus for the establishment of similar institutions all over Europe, so did that of Boston in America. The initiatory steps taken in this city gave an impulse to the active philanthropy of Dr. Samuel Akerly and Mr. Samuel Wood, and through their influence and exertions the New York institution for the blind was incorporated on the 22d of April, 1831. On the 15th of March, 1832, three blind boys were taken from the almshouse of the city and placed under the direction of Dr. John D. Russ, who was invited to coöperate with the managers of the institution from the beginning, and who kindly volunteered his services to give

instruction to the pupils. On the 19th of May of the same year, three other children were added to their number, and with the six a school was opened at No. 47 Mercer street. The experiment proved a success, as was anticipated; and at the end of the year 1833 the institution was removed to its present location on Ninth avenue. During his connection with the school, Dr. Russ devised, among other educational facilities, a phonetic alphabet which showed some ingenuity, but did not come into use. He resigned his place in 1836, and was succeeded by Mr. Silas Jones in August of that year; but he continued to manifest, from time to time, great interest in the improvement of educational appliances for the blind. He was the first projector and advocate of the horizontal system of point writing, and the alphabet in that system which he arranged in the year 1862 and 1863 is identical in its main principles with that which is used in many American institutions to-day, and differs from it only in some of the minor details. A little sheet which was periodically published by Dr. Russ, under the title of the "Experiment," for the purpose of explaining and illustrating his contrivances, bears ample testimony to this statement. Among other things, the doctor devised a method of printing between the lines on both sides of the paper, which was readily adopted at the Paris school for the blind in 1867, and from that institution was carried to England by Dr. T. R. Armitage, who, although always eager to profit by inventions in this direction, does not seem inclined to disclose any of his own. Fortunately, however, there is no danger of great loss to the blind in general from secrecy of this kind, for the real value of the con-

trivances made in such a spirit seldom exceeds the cost of the ink and paper required for their description.

With regard to the early administrations of the New York institution, it may be said that no one was thoroughly successful, and the progress of the school was retarded by the want of an efficient head to direct its affairs. In 1845, Mr. James F. Chamberlain was elected superintendent, and under his management an era of prosperity and advancement dawned for the establishment.

The third American institution was founded in Philadelphia, by the society of friends, on the 5th of March, 1833. A house was soon provided, and the services of Mr. Julius R. Friedlander, as principal, were secured by the managers. Mr. Friedlander was of German origin, and began to occupy himself with the blind in the year 1828, when he resided for a little while at the school in Paris. He continued this study in London, and finally entered the institution for the blind at Bruchsal, in the grand duchy of Baden, as sub-master. The description which the duke of Saxe Weimer had given of the city of Philadelphia, and of the hospitality of its inhabitants, produced in the mind of Friedlander an earnest desire to expatriate himself in order to establish in that city an institution for the education of sightless children. He organized the school with great care and deliberation; gave exhibitions of the attainments of his pupils before the legislatures of Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey, and obtained appropriations for the support of beneficiaries from each of these states, and later from that of Maryland. The institution occupied its present location on Race street in October, 1836.

Mr. Friedlander was obliged to spend the winter of that year in the West Indies, for the restoration of his impaired health; and his place was temporarily supplied by Mr. Sprout, assistant instructor, and Mr. A. W. Penniman, a graduate from the New England school. Mr. Friedlander returned from the South on the 4th of March, 1839, and died at the institution on the 17th of the same month, lamented by managers, teachers and pupils, and was succeeded by Dr. Joshua Roades, who subsequently became superintendent of the Illinois institution for the blind, where he remained until near the end of his life.

Ohio comes next in order in the good work of the education of the blind. The idea of establishing a school in Columbus for that purpose was first conceived by Dr. William M. Awl, as early as 1835. Through his efforts, on the 11th of March, 1836, the legislature passed a resolution, by which he, with two others, Dr. James Hodge and Col. N. H. Swayne, were appointed trustees to collect information in relation to the instruction of the blind, and submit a report to the next general assembly. Circulars were at once sent to the justices of the peace in all the townships in the state; and in order to create a public interest in the subject, Dr. S. G. Howe was invited to lend his assistance. He promptly offered his services, and in the latter part of December, 1836, he appeared before the legislature and a large number of influential persons who were gathered at the state-house, and made a stirring address which, supplemented by an exhibition of the attainments of three of his pupils whom he had brought with him, made so deep an impression upon

the community in general, and upon the minds of the representatives of the people in particular, that in April, 1837, an act incorporating the institution was triumphantly passed, and an appropriation for commencing the building made. The school was organized by Mr. A. W. Penniman, who was recommended to the trustees by Dr. Howe, and on the 4th of July, 1837, was publicly opened in the First Presbyterian church in Columbus. Maps, globes, books and all other educational appliances and apparatus for the young institution were prepared in this establishment, and there exists in our records a copy of a long and exceedingly interesting letter, addressed by Dr. Howe to Dr. Awl, in which a complete plan of buildings adapted to the wants of the blind is sketched. I need hardly add in this connection that long experience, keen observation, and mature reflection had so essentially modified Dr. Howe's early views on this point, that he became the irreconcilable foe to expensive piles of bricks and mortar and vast congregations of human beings under one roof, and the enthusiastic and irresistible advocate of the family or cottage system.

The fifth American institution was founded in the state of Virginia; and the following letter of Dr. Howe, dated Boston, March 14, 1837, and addressed to Rev. W. S. Plummer, of Richmond, clearly shows its origin: —

"Dear Sir, — With this letter you will receive a copy of our annual report for the past year. Has anything been done yet towards establishing an institution for the education of the blind in your section of the country? If not, the work should be commenced, and that soon; for since Providence has pointed out the

way by which so much knowledge and happiness and benefit, both to soul and body, may be conferred upon this hitherto neglected class, it seems to me imperative upon us to be acting in it.

"I would gladly have visited Virginia with my pupils on my return from Ohio; but strong necessity bade me return here at once.

"I feel confident that if the subject could be brought before the public and your legislature, the foundation of a noble establishment which would confer benefit through future ages might be laid broad and deep. I believe, too, that a more vivid impression could be made now, while the subject is comparatively new, than hereafter.

"Can I in any way be useful in such an undertaking? I shall have a vacation and short release from my duties here in May. I would gladly devote the time to any effort for the benefit of the blind in any other section of the country, provided there was a reasonable hope of success, and prospect of coöperation from others. Will you give me your views on the subject?

"With much respect, truly yours,

"S. G. Howe."

The words of this letter found a peculiarly congenial soil for fruition in the tender heart of Mr. Plummer, and a correspondence ensued between the two philanthropists which resulted in an arrangement for a visit of Dr. Howe, with three of his pupils, to Virginia. Meanwhile the proposition of Mr. F. A. P. Barnard, of New York, to unite the deaf-mutes with the blind, was accepted, and a combined exhibition was given before the legislature in Richmond, in January, 1838, which produced the desired effect. On the 31st of March of the same year the bill to incorporate a dual institution for the deaf-mutes and the blind was passed, and the sum of twenty thousand dollars was appropriated for the purpose of procuring a suitable site and erecting

thereon the necessary buildings, together with ten thousand dollars for the support of the establishment. A board of visitors was appointed during Governor Campbell's administration, and, after some delay for preliminary arrangements, the two schools of the institution at Staunton got into full operation, with the Rev. Joseph D. Tyler as principal of the department for deaf-mutes and Dr. J. C. M. Merrillat of that for the blind. Virginia's example of bringing the two classes together under one organization and government was unfortunately followed by eight other states, three of which — those of Louisiana, Minnesota and Michigan — have dissolved the unnatural and vexatious union, and formed separate institutions for each class.

Next to Virginia, Kentucky fell into the line of the good cause. The first attempt to induce the legislature of that state to establish a school for the blind was prompted by a former pupil of Dr. Howe, Mr. Otis Patten, in 1840; but, so far as I can judge from the correspondence which I have before me, it was not crowned with success. Mr. Patten wrote to his teacher and friend of the failure; and from Dr. Howe's reply, dated July 7th, 1841, I make the following extract: — "Do not attempt anything unless you are sure that every possible provision has been made for every possible contingency. I have it very much to heart to see institutions for the instruction of the blind built up in every part of the country, and I would willingly make any personal sacrifice or effort to effect it. If it is thought I can be of any use, I will come to Louisville and take the matter in hand. I will devote myself entirely to it, and ask no compensation for my time or expenses." On the 15th

of November of the same year, Dr. Howe addressed a letter to Dr. J. B. Flint, of Louisville, on the subject, in which, after referring to Mr. Patten's earnest efforts, he speaks as follows: — "I am very desirous of making the attempt this winter myself, with the aid of two of my pupils, to persuade your legislature to some immediate action on the subject, and if I can obtain a hearing I am sure I shall succeed." Arrangements were at once made, and Dr. Howe, with his two favorite pupils, Abby and Sophia Carter, proceeded to Kentucky, where — joined by Mr. William Chapin, then superintendent of the Ohio institution, with some of his best pupils — they gave together an exhibition before the legislature. On the 5th of February, 1842, an institution was incorporated by an act of the general assembly, and visitors or managers were soon appointed. A suitable house was rented in Louisville, which was furnished by the liberality of the inhabitants of that city, who also generously contributed funds sufficient to sustain the institution during the first six months of its infancy; and the school was opened on the 9th of May, with Mr. Bryce Patten as director, Mr. Otis Patten as teacher, and five pupils, whose number increased to ten before the end of the year.

On his way to Kentucky, Dr. Howe stopped at Columbia, South Carolina, and made a strong plea in behalf of the blind before the legislature of that state. From a long correspondence relating to the preliminary arrangements of this visit I make a few extracts, which are characteristic of the great champion of humanity In a letter dated July 4th, 1841, and addressed to Dr. H. S. Dickenson, of Charleston, Dr. Howe speaks as follows: — "I am inclined to the opinion that no pre-

paration will be necessary; because I have not the slightest doubt about being able to carry the feelings of your legislators entirely away with the subject. I do not mean that I have any peculiar power of enlisting the feelings, so far from it, the very absence of eloquence gives additional effect to the irresistible appeal which the blind children themselves make." To governor T. P. Richardson, Dr. Howe wrote as follows on the subject: — "I desire most ardently, before taking my hand from the plough, to see schools for the blind established in every part of the country, or at least provision made for their support. With this view I intend to address the legislature of South Carolina this winter, and so endeavor to induce them to do for the blind of the state what they do for the deaf and dumb, viz., make an appropriation for their education." To his friend, Dr. Francis Lieber, who was then professor of history and political economy in the South Carolina college, at Columbia, Dr. Howe wrote as follows on the 30th of November, 1841: — "It has occurred to me that you might be of essential service to the cause of the blind, if you would exert your influence to create an interest in this subject. From Columbia I shall go to Kentucky, where I think an institution will be founded immediately. I am very desirous of seeing ample provision made in every part of my country for the education of the blind, and I doubt not I shall be gratified."

Yes, Dr. Howe's most ardent wishes in this direction were fulfilled; for, in addition to the above-named states, twenty-four others established institutions in the following chronological order: — Tennessee, 1844; Indiana, 1847; Illinois, 1849; North Carolina, 1849; Wiscon-

sin, 1850; Missouri, 1851; Georgia, 1852; Maryland, 1853; Michigan, 1854; South Carolina, 1855; Texas, 1856; Alabama, 1858; Arkansas, 1859; California, 1860; Minnesota, 1862; Kansas, 1867; New York State, 1867; West Virginia, 1870; Oregon, 1872; Colorado, 1874; Nebraska, 1875. Thus twenty-nine States support their own institutions for the education of the blind, while the rest make provision for the instruction of their sightless children in the nearest schools.

European and American Institutions Compared.

In order to measure and compare the value and importance of the schools of Europe and of this country correctly and fairly, it is necessary to look at the principles which underlie them and the purpose with which they are administered.

In most of the European institutions the prevailing idea is, that what is done for the blind is in the spirit of favor and charity, rather than of right and obligation. The liberal and elevating influences of a free and thorough education, which alone can assist this afflicted class to rise above the clouds of ignorance and common prejudice, and breath the free air of independence, are wanting, and a depressing atmosphere of social inferiority and dependence surrounds them. A large number of the so-called schools, especially those in Great Britain, are mere asylums, chiefly supported by annual contributions, which are made and received in the nature of alms. This helps to strengthen and perpetuate what it is most desirable to destroy, namely, the old, unhappy and disadvantageous association in the public mind of blindness with beggary. But even in those establishments which

are endowed and supported by the governments, the pupils are brought up under such influences as favor the segregation of the blind into a class by themselves, and are neither inspired with those higher views of man's dignity and self-respect, nor fired up with that unconquerable desire for usefulness and self-maintenance which are so indispensable for their success in life. Hence the greatest number of their graduates relapse into their original state of inanition, and the glimmering of happiness which they have caught while under instruction is followed by a doubly dark and wretched future. The fact that even so eminent a man as Penjon, who held a professorship of mathematics at the college of Angers for thirty years with success and distinction, spent the latter part of his life, either willingly or from force of circumstances, amidst the misery of the *hospice des Quinze-Vingts*, illustrates strikingly the unfavorable effects of early education and training at so famous a school as that of Paris.

The most valuable distinctive feature of the American institutions is that they constitute an integral part of the educational system of the country. Their existence is planted in the letter and nourished by the liberal spirit of its fundamental laws. They are the creations of justice and equity, and not the offspring of charity and favor. Thus the right of the blind to participate in all the educational benefits provided for every child in the commonwealth is acknowledged by the state in its sovereign capacity; and since they cannot be taught in the common schools, an express provision is made for their instruction. This policy has acted very favorably upon the blind. It has strengthened their good im-

pulses, and fostered in them an upward tendency and noble determination to become useful and independent. It has inspired them with self-respect, and made them aim at a higher place in the social scale than they would otherwise have sought. The fruits of this policy began to appear soon after the organization of the American institutions. As early as 1837, Madame Eugénie Niboyet made the following remarks on the schools of this country in her valuable work entitled *Des aveugles et de leur éducation*: — "The American institutions, recently founded, are in many respects much superior to that of Paris." Again she says elsewhere: — "The Americans have left us behind. The pupil has become stronger (*plus fort*) than the master."

Another distinctive feature in the American schools is the spirit of individual independence and self-reliance which Dr. Howe breathed into the system of education and training which he arranged for the sightless children of New England, and which was afterwards more or less copied everywhere. He taught the blind that the maxim, "Heaven helps those who help themselves," is a well-tried one, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. He inculcated among them the healthy doctrine of self-help as the most potent lever to raise them in the social scale; and as soon as it was understood and carried into action, ignorance and dependence upon alms and charity were reduced to their minimum: for the two principles are directly antagonistic; and what Victor Hugo says of the pen and the sword applies alike to them: "This kills that." I can give no better estimate of the powers of the great philanthropist in this respect than the one

made by Mr. George Combe in his "Tour in the United States," vol. I. p. 228, which runs as follows: — "It appears to us that Dr. Howe has a bold, active, enterprising mind, and to a certain extent he impresses his own character on the minds of his pupils. He enlarges the practical boundaries of their capacities by encouraging them to believe in the greatness of their natural extent."

In bringing this sketch to a close, I must add that the blind have availed themselves of the advantages offered by the schools, and have proved that in the stream of life they are not mere straws thrown upon the water to mark the direction of the current, but that they have within themselves the power of strong swimmers, and are capable of striking out for themselves; of buffeting with the waves, and directing their own independent course to some extent. Thus they have furnished a remarkable illustration of what may be effected by the energetic development and exercise of faculties, the germs of which at least are in every human heart.

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